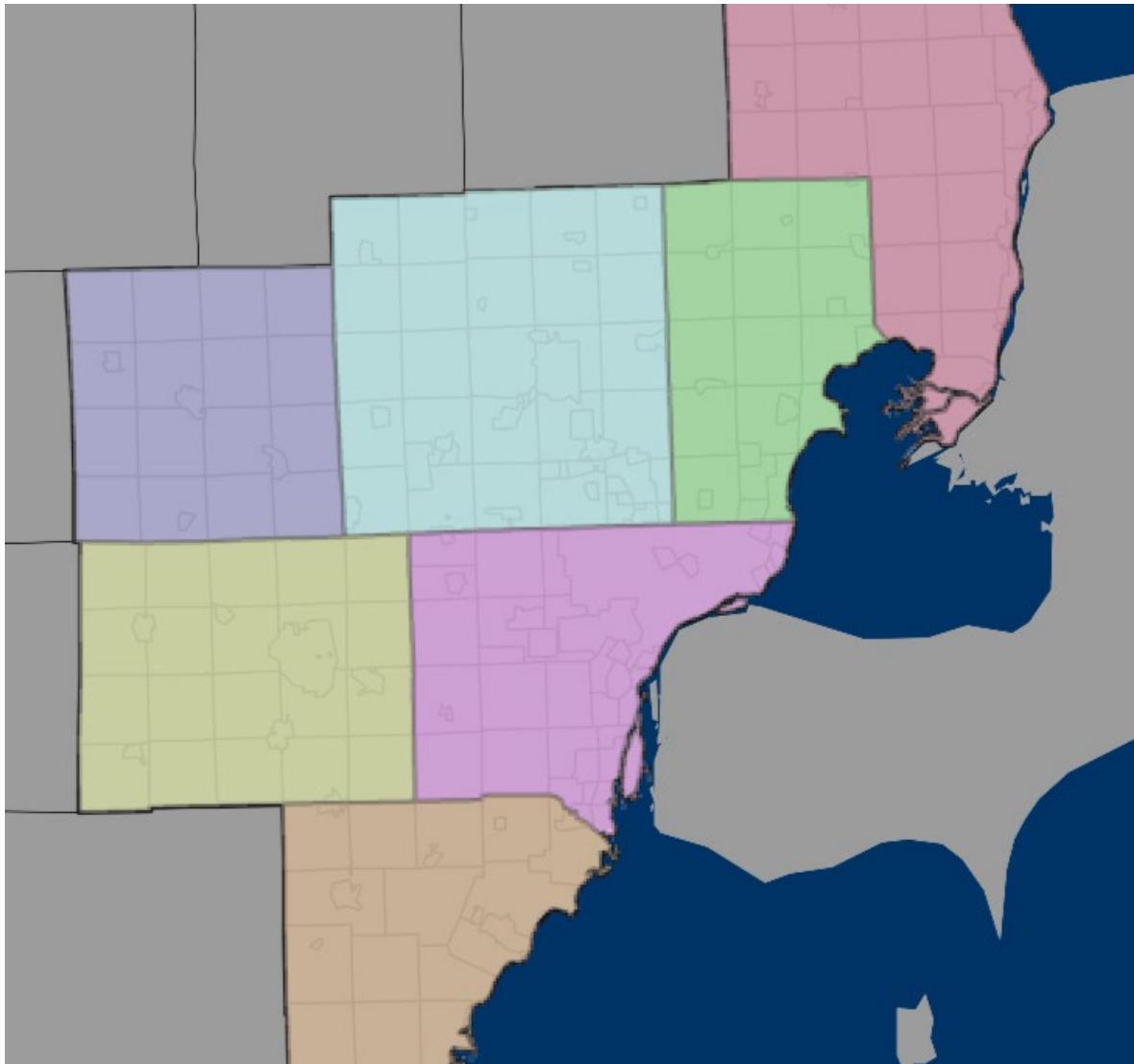


November 12, 2025

Recast City Announces a Collaboration with the Michigan Municipal League



Press Release: Recast City Announces a Collaboration with the Michigan Municipal League to Enable Six Southeast Michigan Cities to Participate in a Specialized Program for Downtown Revitalization

Washington, DC – November 12, 2025 – Ilana Preuss, Founder & CEO of [Recast City](#) and a leading champion of downtown revitalization through small-scale manufacturing, announced today that Recast City has formed a collaboration with the [Michigan Municipal League](#) that will enable six Southeast Michigan cities to participate – at no cost to the cities – in a specialized program for downtown revitalization.

The program is called Recast Leaders, and it is an initiative of Recast City that has successfully energized downtown revitalization in more than 200 cities in 44 states over 11 years. The program is led by Ilana Preuss, a renowned authority with 25 years of related experience, who provides the expert coaching at the core of the program.

The Michigan Municipal League, with support from the [Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation](#), will sponsor a Recast Leaders cohort of six Southeast Michigan cities, each of which will have 3-4 community participants representing them. Those participants will typically be economic development directors, main street and downtown development leaders, mayors and city managers, business district executives, entrepreneurship program leaders, or real estate developers focused on community impact. The method focuses on local leaders who have authority to influence policy, programming, and development decisions and a readiness to implement changes within 6-12 months, alongside direct engagement of local businesses, property owners, and small business supporters. The program itself takes place over a 10-month period, beginning in February 2026.

“I’m excited to have this opportunity to collaborate with the Michigan Municipal League to work with six Southeast Michigan cities simultaneously,” said Ilana Preuss. “Our annual national Recast Leaders cohort is spread out geographically, and it will be special to bring together neighboring cities in our peer learning and direct community engagement method. This sponsored cohort in Michigan will build lasting change in these communities to energize their downtowns, strengthen the local business community, and showcase the exciting impact of product businesses to create a place people are proud of.”

Recast City is currently accepting expressions of interest from cities in the seven counties of Southeast Michigan: Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne. Interested community leaders can join an information session hosted by the Michigan Municipal League on November 20th. Applications are being accepted from now through January, but the cohort could be filled more quickly.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to have a significant impact on downtown revitalization across Southeast Michigan," said Richard Murphy, Senior Program Manager at the Michigan Municipal League. "We're very pleased to be collaborating on this with Ilana Preuss and Recast City and look forward to seeing what catalytic forces can be unleashed."

Key to the success of Recast Leaders is a focus on small-scale manufacturers. These businesses create products – from hardware to handbags to hot sauce – that are sold in retail shops and online and are thus not solely dependent on foot traffic for revenue. That makes them well-suited to neighborhoods and business districts seeking to revitalize from significant vacancies. They add vitality to communities of all sizes, as they often combine production facilities with a retail store and space for programming. They can play an even greater role in the civic life of communities – becoming destinations for local residents and visitors, bringing much-needed economic vitality to neighborhoods and business districts eager for it.

Most cities know what needs to happen: fill vacant storefronts; support local entrepreneurs; create the kind of place where businesses thrive and people want to spend time. The challenge is to move from vision to implementation quickly and effectively.

Recast Leaders provides applied methods that build momentum, create visible wins, and establish the foundation for long-term growth. It offers a proven roadmap, expert coaching, and peer support to transform a downtown or nearby commercial area into a thriving destination in just 10 months building on this potential of small-scale manufacturing.

Through the program, participating leaders discover hidden assets, build powerful coalitions, remove key barriers, and create their own action plans to implement with confidence. Within 6-12 months, graduates of Recast Leaders consistently fill vacant storefronts with thriving product businesses, launch business support programs that help entrepreneurs scale, secure property investments and redevelopment projects, build stronger networks connecting business owners and community leaders, and implement policy changes that remove barriers to business growth.

For more information or to speak with Ilana Preuss, contact Ilana Preuss at ilana@recastcity.com

About Recast City

[Recast City](#) is a firm founded and led by Ilana Preuss, a leading champion of small-scale manufacturing and author of [*Recast Your City: How to Save Your Downtown with Small-Scale Manufacturing*](#) (Island Press, 2021). Founded in 2014 and based in Greater Washington, DC, Recast City works with local leaders, real estate developers, city and other civic leaders to integrate space for small-scale producers into redevelopment projects and place-based economic development. Over the past 11 years, Recast City has worked with over 200 communities in 44 states and the District of Columbia to revitalize their downtowns through small-scale manufacturing.

About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is a grantmaking organization dedicated primarily to sustained investment in the quality of life of the people of Southeast Michigan and Western New York. The two areas reflect Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.'s devotion to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his beloved Buffalo Bills NFL team. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson provided that a significant share of his estate be used to continue a life-long generosity of spirit by funding the Foundation that bears his name. Based in Detroit, the Foundation began with a grantmaking capacity of \$1.2 billion over a 20-year period, which expires January 8, 2035. This structure is consistent

with Mr. Wilson's desire for the Foundation's impact to be immediate, substantial, measurable, and overseen by those who knew him best. For more information visit www.rcwjrf.org.